

to be stout. He walked with a wonderfully light and agile step for a man of his weight ; he seemed to reach his seat much as a cat might have done. Indeed, despite his bulk, there was something strangely feline about the stranger.

Venner gave a peculiar gasp and gurgle. His eyes started. All the blood receded from his brown face, leaving him ghastly white under his tan. It was no aspect of fear—rather one of surprise, of strong and unconquerable emotion. At the same moment Venner's hand snapped the stem of his wine glass, and the champagne frothed upon the table.

"Who is that man?" Venner asked of the waiter. His tone was so strained and harsh that he hardly recognised his own voice. "Who is the man, I say? No, no; I don't mean him. I mean that stout man, with the lady in white, over there."

The waiter stared at the speaker in astonishment. He seemed to wonder where he had been all these years.

"That, sir, is Mr. Mark Fenwick, the great American millionaire."

Venner waved the speaker aside. He was recovering from his emotion now; the blood had returned once more to his cheeks. He became conscious of the fact that Gurdon was regarding him with a polite, yet none the less critical, wonder.

"What is the matter?" the latter asked. "Really, the air seems full of mystery. Do you know that for the last two minutes